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Kissinger Testifies He Told Justice of Korean Scandal

By Charles R. Babcock
Washington Post Staff Writer

Former secretary of state Henry A. Kissinger testified yesterday that it wasn't until 1975 that he received U.S. intelligence reports that South Korean agents were "bribing" rather than lobbying members of Congress.

Kissinger told a House International Relations subcommittee that he told President Ford about the sensitive new reports—apparently intercepts from the super-secret National Security Agency. They agreed, he said, to overrule intelligence community objections and turn the material over to the Justice Department.

"Indeed this whole investigation was started because I turned over to the attorney general a list of names we had," Kissinger said.

The subcommittee, headed by Rep. Donald Fraser (D-Minn.), has been investigating why Nixon administration officials failed to act on reports that alleged South Korean agents, including Washington businessman Tongsun Park, were attempting to influence members of Congress.

Kissinger said he could recall only one of three top-secret, eyes-only memos FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover wrote to him in 1971 and 1972, when he was President Nixon's national security affairs adviser, about CIA reports of the South Korean lobbying campaign.

Former attorney general John N. Mitchell testified last month that he, too, recalled seeing only one of the three Hoover memos.

Kissinger explained that he was busy with higher priority foreign pol-

icy issues at the time, including the Nixon administration's initiative on relations with the People's Republic of China. Besides, Kissinger said, Mitchell's Justice Department, not his office, had jurisdiction in such alleged criminal matters.

Yesterday's appearance was Kissinger's first public explanation of his knowledge of the Korean influence-buying campaign. His testimony conflicted at times with that of others, cited by Fraser, but he was treated with deference by his interrogators throughout the one-hour session.

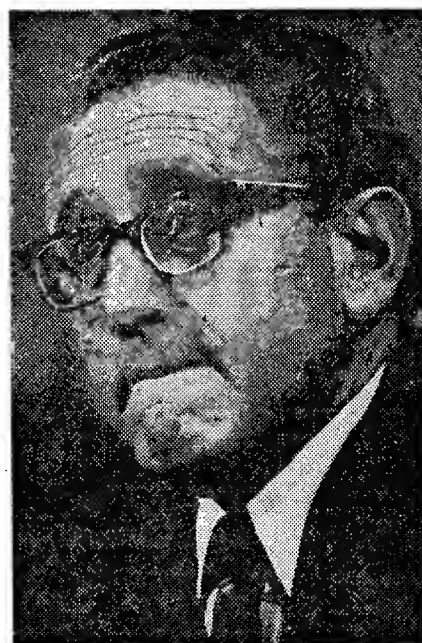
Fraser did not ask him, for instance, anything about Tongsun Park or Kim Dong Jo, the former Korean ambassador who also has been accused of making cash payments to members of Congress. A subcommittee aide said later, "It wouldn't have done any good. He wouldn't have remembered."

Kissinger told reporters after the hearing that he didn't recall hearing any such reports about Kim Dong Jo.

He declined to elaborate on his testimony about the 1975 intelligence reports that became the basis for the initial Justice Department investigation, except to say the source was not the Korean presidential palace.

There have been demonstrations in Korea in recent weeks over reports—denied in Washington—that the United States planted an electronic "bug" in the residence of President Park Chung Hee.

During his testimony, Kissinger said that Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., his deputy on the National Security Council, would have seen sensitive communications like the ones from



HENRY A. KISSINGER

... "I turned over ... a list of names"

Hoover. But Haig, now the NATO commander in Europe, told the subcommittee that he had seen none of the Hoover memos.

Kissinger did recall, he said, getting word of the Hoover memo that mentioned the "alleged bribery" of a member of Congress. Since the member, later identified as then-Rep. Cornelius Gallagher (D-N.J.), was indicted, "I assumed the Justice Department was dealing with the matter," Kissinger said. Gallagher pleaded guilty and served a prison term on an unrelated tax evasion charge.

Kissinger testified, as Mitchell did last month, that he would have recalled a reference in another Hoover memo that the Koreans had given several hundred thousand dollars to the Democratic Party. "I find it even more inconceivable that Mr. Mitchell would have done nothing about it," he said.

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